

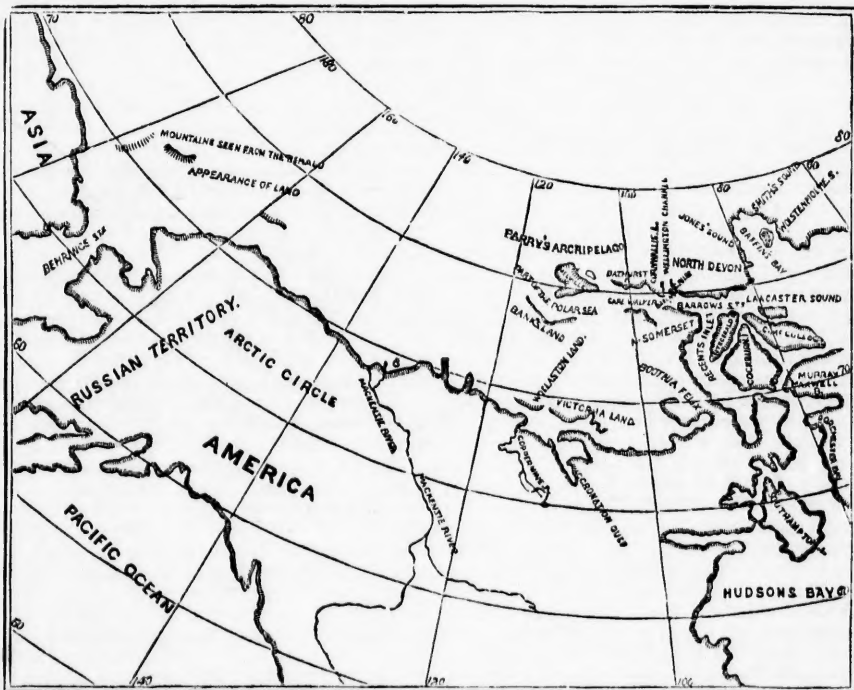
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SIR JOHN FRANKLIN AND THE ARCTIC EXPEDITIONS.

"Whither sail you, Sir John Franklin?"
Cried a whaler in Baffin's Bay;
"To know, if between the land and the Pole,
I may find a broad sea-way."
"I charge you back, Sir John Franklin,
As you would live and thrive,
For between the land and the frozen Pole,
No man may sail alive."
But lightly laughed the stout Sir John,
And spoke unto his men—
"Half England is wrong, if he is right;
Bear off to westward then."

ALL that seamanship, and science, and courage
could accomplish towards the discovery of a north-
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west passage by sea, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, may be said to have been already done before 1845. But when a further attempt was resolved on, it could not have been entrusted to abler hands than those of Sir John Franklin. Nor did the Admiralty grudge any expense in the outfit of the ships destined for the hazardous undertaking. The vessels selected were the Erebus and Terror, both originally built for bomb ships, and therefore strongly framed, and both already tried in similar service. The Terror had been beset in Repulse Bay in 1836-7, for more than eleven months, in drifting floes of ice, and exposed to every variety of

assault and pressure to which a vessel is liable, in such a dangerous position. In this severe and lengthened trial she had been often pressed more or less out of the water, or thrown over on one side. Both ships, before being put under Franklin's command, were rendered as strong as the resources of science could ensure. The best plans that former experience could suggest for ventilating and warming them in winter were adopted, and full supplies of every requisite for arctic navigation were provided, including an ample stock of warm bedding, clothing, and provisions, with a proportion of preserved meats and pemican. Thus equipped, the expedition sailed from England, on the 19th of May, 1845, and reached Whale Fish Islands, on the Greenland coast of Davis's Straits, early in July. And the last letters that have been received from the officers or crew are those which were sent by the transport ship which accompanied them thus far.

If the reader would follow us intelligently, he should now examine our map, and trace the various coasts that are laid down therein. He will observe Lancaster Sound and Barrow's Straits, leading almost due westward to Melville Island. On the right hand of this channel he will find a region called North Devon. Prosecuting his travels, he will reach Wellington Channel, and beyond it Cornwallis Island. Another channel separates, or seems to separate, this land from Bathurst Island, which is the nearest land to Melville Island. The regions north of the coast we have thus traced constitute a *terra incognita*,* or, perhaps, a *mare incognitum*. Returning to Lancaster Sound, we trace the southern coast of the channel, and, having no ice to interrupt our progress, we soon reach the Prince Regent's Inlet, down which—that is, southward—is the way to Boothia Felix, where Sir James Ross discovered the position of the magnetic pole. Travelling westward from the entrance of Prince Regent's Inlet, we arrive at another opening, and observe Cape Walker beyond it. Here discovery fails us, but hitherto it has been supposed that there is a channel at no great distance, passing southward to Coronation Gulf, which it is supposed to enter near Victoria Land. Resuming our course, and passing the region which is thus blank, we reach Banks's Land, of which nothing is known beyond the existence of its coast, and which lies due south of Melville Island, from which it is separated by a part of the Polar Sea. All beyond this, in the latitude of Lancaster Sound and Barrow's Straits, is unknown. A few minutes' study of these places on our map will render our narrative clear and simple.

Sir John Franklin's instructions were, to pass through Lancaster Sound, and push on to the westward in the latitude of $74\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$, without loss of time or stopping to examine any opening to the northward, until he reached the longitude of Cape Walker, which is situated in about 98° west. He was to use every effort to penetrate to the southward and westward of that point, and to pursue as direct a course for Behring's Straits as circumstances might permit. He was cautioned not to attempt to pass by the western extremity of Melville Island, until he had ascertained that a perma-

nent barrier of ice or other obstacle closed the prescribed route. In the event of not being able to penetrate to the westward, he was to enter Wellington Sound in his second summer. He was further directed to transmit accounts of his proceedings to the Admiralty, by means of the natives and the Hudson's Bay Company, should opportunities offer; and also, after passing the 65th meridian, to throw overboard daily a copper cylinder, containing a paper stating the ships' position. It was also understood that he would cause piles of stones or signal posts to be erected on conspicuous headlands at convenient times.

When the transport ship parted company with the expedition in July, 1845, the officers and crews of the two ships, amounting to 130, were in good health and spirits. "Of our prospects," wrote one of them to a friend at home, "we know little more than when we left England, but look forward with anxiety to our reaching 72° , where it seems we are likely to meet the first obstruction, if any exists. On board we are as comfortable as it is possible to be. I need hardly tell you how much we are all delighted with our captain. He has, I am sure, won not only the respect but the love of every person on board, by his amiable manners and kindness to all; and his influence is always employed for some good purpose, both among the officers and men." Sir John himself, writing at the same time to Colonel Sabine, after noticing that the Erebus and Terror had on board provisions, fuel, clothing, and stores, for three years, complete from that date, adds, "I hope my dear wife and daughter will not be over anxious if we should not return by the time they have fixed upon; and I must beg of you to give them the benefit of your advice and experience when that time arrives, for you know well that without success in our object, even after the second winter, we should wish to try some other channel, if the state of our provisions and the health of the crews justify it."

The two ships were seen on the 26th of the same month, in latitude $74^{\circ} 48' N.$, longitude $66^{\circ} 13' W.$, moored to an iceberg, waiting for a favourable opportunity of entering or rounding the middle ice, and crossing to Lancaster Sound, distant in a direct westerly line from their position about 220 geographical miles. On that day, a boat, manned by seven officers, boarded the Prince of Wales whaler. They were all in high spirits, and invited Captain Dannett to dine with Sir John Franklin on the following day. But, meantime, a favourable breeze sprang up, and the whaler sailed. They were seen in the same place (Melville Bay) still later, by Captain Martin, of the whaler Enterprise. Sir John told Captain Martin that he had five years' provisions,* which he could "spin out" for seven, and that his people were busily engaged

* This fact was made known to the public only in December last, through Captain Penny, who received his information at Peterhead from Captain Martin himself. The latter assigned as a reason for not mentioning the circumstance sooner, that he did not consider it of any importance, and that when Lady Franklin was at Peterhead about two years ago, he did not like to intrude on her. We have private communications on which we can rely, attesting that Captain M. is a man of the strictest integrity and veracity. And if his memory is at all at fault as to the number of years mentioned by Sir John Franklin, yet the circumstance of such a conversation having occurred, strengthens the impression now almost universal, that the officers of the Erebus and Terror contemplated the possibility of a very long absence.

* *Terra incognita*, an unknown land; *mare incognitum*, an unknown sea.

in salting down birds—of which they had several casks full already, and twelve men were out shooting more. This is the last sight that was obtained of Franklin's ships.

In January, 1847, a year-and-a-half after the above date, Captain Sir John Ross expressed his conviction to the Admiralty that the discovery ships were frozen up at the western end of Melville Island, from whence their return would be for ever prevented by the accumulation of ice behind them, and volunteered his services to carry relief to the crews. Although it was judged that it was too early to entertain apprehensions for Sir John Franklin's safety, the Admiralty called for the opinions of several naval officers who were well acquainted with arctic navigation, in order to concert plans of relief to be carried out when the proper time should arrive. The opinions of the officers consulted varied considerably. Some thought that Sir John Franklin never entered Lancaster Sound, either because the ships met with some fatal disaster in Baffin's Bay, and went down with the entire loss of both crews; or that Sir John endeavoured to fulfil the purposes of the expedition by taking some other route than the one exclusively indicated for him by his instructions. It is now known that these suppositions were incorrect, and even at that time they seemed very improbable. The most probable conjecture was, that Sir John had literally followed his instructions, not stopping to examine any openings, either to the northward or southward of Barrow's Straits, and had pushed on to the westward until he reached Cape Walker, in longitude 98°, from which he was to incline to the south-west, and steer as directly as he could for Behring's Straits. But from this point all was perplexity. Various circumstances combined to indicate that there was a passage to the southward between Cape Walker and Banks's Land, terminating between Victoria and Wollaston Lands in Coronation Gulf, and that there was no passage directly to the westward between Banks's Land and Melville Island. In this region, if anywhere, it was thought traces of the expedition were to be expected.

In the event of the state of the ice being such that Sir John Franklin could pass through it in a westerly or south-westerly direction, it was judged more than probable that he would attempt Wellington Sound, or any other northern opening that was accessible.

The result of these consultations was a determination on the part of the Admiralty to send out, in 1848, three several searching expeditions—one to Lancaster Sound, another overland, through the Hudson's Bay Company's territories, down the Mackenzie River, and the third to Behring's Straits. The object of the first, and the most important of the three, was to follow up the route supposed to have been pursued by Sir John Franklin; and, by searching diligently for any sign-posts he might have erected, to trace him out and carry the required relief to his exhausted crews. Sir James C. Ross was appointed to the command of this expedition, consisting of the *Enterprise* and *Investigator*. These vessels reached the three islands of Baffin on the 26th July, 1848, three years exactly after Sir John Franklin's ships were last seen near the same place. After an unavailing search, in

which, strange to tell, was found a memorandum left by Sir Edward Parry in 1819, the ships were hove into winter quarters on the 12th of October, on the eastern side of the entrance of the Prince Regent's Inlet. During the winter, many white foxes were taken in traps; and copper collars, on which were inscribed notices of the situation of the vessels, and of the depôts of provision, having been secured round their necks, they were set at liberty again. In May and June of the following year, exploring parties were sent out from the ships in various directions, but without any successful result. It was not till August that they were able to cut a way out for the ships through the ice. While contending with the loose packs in the neighbourhood of Wellington Channel, and struggling to advance to the westward, a strong gale of wind on the 1st of September suddenly closed the ice around them, and they remained helplessly beset until the 25th, by which time they had drifted out of Lancaster Strait. As the season was now far advanced, further search that year was thus frustrated by an accident often experienced in the navigation of the arctic seas; and all harbours in that vicinity being closed for the winter, Sir James reluctantly gave the signal to bear up for England. The *North Star* was sent out with supplies for Sir James Ross in the spring of 1849, but did not succeed in falling in with him. Owing to the unusual quantity of ice in Baffin's Bay that summer, and the frosts which glued the floes into one impenetrable mass, this vessel was unable to cross over to Lancaster Sound, and became involved in the ice, with which she drifted the whole of September, until, on the last day of that month, she was providentially driven into Wolstenholme Sound, on the east side of Baffin's Bay, where, there being a pool of open water, she was at length extricated. Here she wintered, and lay till the 1st of August, 1850, being the most northerly position in which any vessel has been known to have been laid up.

The second of the three searching expeditions which left England in 1848, was that overland, under the command of Sir John Richardson, the old friend and fellow-traveller of Sir John Franklin. The volumes just published, entitled "*A Boat Voyage through Rupert's Land*," to which we are indebted for many of the preceding facts, prove that nothing that experience and zealous affection could accomplish was left undone. The expedition found its way across Rupert's Land, the territories of the Hudson's Bay Company, to the Mackenzie River, and along the course of this stream, amid many obstacles, to the Arctic Sea—then along the coast to the neighbourhood of the Coppermine River. One great purpose of the search along the coast was to afford relief to detached parties from the *Erebus* and *Terror*, or to the entire crews, had they directed their way to the continent; and Sir John Richardson's researches proved, at least, that none of the party, having gained that coast, were dragging out a miserable existence among the Esquimaux, without the means of repairing to the fur-posts. In the following summer of 1849, Mr. Rae, Richardson's able and zealous coadjutor, ascertained that the Esquimaux inhabitants of Wollaston Land had seen neither the ships nor white men.

As only small packs of ice, and few in number, were seen off the Coppermine by Sir John Franklin in 1820, by Sir John Richardson in 1826, and by Dease and Simpson in 1836 and 1837, being four several summers, the sight of the sea entirely covered in the end of August, 1848, was wholly unexpected by Sir John Richardson, and was attributed by him to northerly and easterly gales. But it was afterwards ascertained that the season was equally unfavourable throughout the arctic seas north of America. And this has led him to speculate on the idea of a cycle of good and bad seasons, which has often been mooted by meteorologists. In a paper published in the "Philosophical Transactions for 1850," Mr. Glaisher has shown, from eighty years' observations in London and at Greenwich, that groups of warm years alternate with groups of cold ones, in such a way as to render it most probable that the mean annual temperatures rise and fall in a series of elliptical curves, which correspond to periods of about fourteen years, though local or casual disturbing forces cause the means of particular years to rise above the curve or fall below it. "The same laws, doubtless, operate in North America," says Sir John Richardson, "producing a similar gradual increase and subsequent decrease of mean heat, in a series of years, though the summits of the curves are not likely to be coincident with, and are very probably opposed to, those of Europe. . . . It can be stated only as a conjecture, though by no means an improbable one, that Sir John Franklin entered Lancaster Sound at the close of a group of warm years, when the ice was in the most favourable condition of diminution, and that since then the annual heat has attained its minimum, probably in 1847 or 1848, and may now be increasing again. At all events, it is conceivable that, having pushed on boldly in one of 'the last of the favourable years of the cycle, the ice, produced in the unfavourable ones which followed, has shut him in, and been found insurmountable."

The third, or Behring's Straits expedition, was composed of the *Herald*, Captain Kellett, then employed in surveying the Pacific coasts of America, and the *Plover*, Commander Moore. The vessels were expected to arrive in Behring's Straits by way of the Pacific, about the beginning of July, 1848, and were directed to "proceed along the American coast as far as possible, consistent with the certainty of preventing the ships being beset by the ice." Two whale boats were to go to the eastward in search of the missing voyagers, and to communicate, if possible, with the Mackenzie River party. This important part of the expedition was accomplished in the summer of 1849, and a survey of the entire coast from Behring's Straits to the Mackenzie river was effected, but again in vain.

Sir James C. Ross, it will be remembered, returned to England in 1849. But the search was not yet considered hopeless. The Admiralty resolved that a still more vigorous effort to discover traces of the missing voyagers should be made, and accordingly the *Enterprise* and *Investigator* were again fitted out and despatched to Behring's Straits, the former under the command of Captain Collinson, C.B., and the latter of Commander M'Clure. For the search on the side of Lancaster

Sound preparations were made on a large scale. The *Resolute* was commissioned by Capt. Horatio T. Austen, and the *Assistance*, Captain Erasmus Ommaney, was put under his orders; together with the *Pioneer* and *Intrepid*, steam tenders to the two vessels. Captain William Penny, an experienced whale fisher, was also engaged for the search, and placed in command of the *Lady Franklin* and *Sophia*. In addition to these expeditions fitted out by the Admiralty, others furnished from private sources showed the interest that was widely and deeply felt in the cause. Captain Sir John Ross, notwithstanding his advanced years, sailed in the *Felix schooner*; and by the munificence of Mr. Henry Grinnell, a New York merchant, the United States sent forth the *Advance* and *Rescue** on the same humane quest, under the command of Lieut. De Haven, U.S.N., and Mr. S. P. Griffin. *Lady Franklin* likewise, with that untiring energy and conjugal devotion which has marked her conduct throughout, despatched the *Prince Albert*, under the orders of Commander Forsyth of the royal navy.†

This squadron was assembled in Lancaster Sound in the month of August, 1850, at which time the *North Star* was also there, forming in all a fleet of ten vessels. We cannot follow the details of the operations now prosecuted. Enough to say that the daring, the energy, and the endurance of those engaged in them cannot be too highly praised. By well-planned and thoroughly organized travelling parties, the whole coast north and south of Barrow's Straits, and round the south-west end of Melville Island, was traced, but without any practical result. The longest journey was performed by a party under the command of Lieut. M'Clintock, in the spring of 1851. On their return the ice began to thaw, so that their sufferings were most trying. At each step they sank in the melting ice, and at times dark slushy pools would open before them, whose bottom might be in the fathomless sea. But the men's courage never flagged, and after nearly four months' absence they were welcomed back by their companions in the month of July.

In our second paper we shall have the satisfaction of recording the traces that have since been discovered of Sir John Franklin's expedition, and the projects for further search that are now contemplated. Meantime, there are many facts in the history of arctic navigation to sustain our hopes that some at least of our missing countrymen may yet be restored to their families. In 1743, a vessel sent by Jeremias Ottamkoff, of Mesen, in *Sergovia*, for the purpose of fishing, was frozen in off East Spitzbergen.‡ Unprepared for wintering, and anxious to secure to themselves a home on land, four men were sent in search of a hut or its remains, which they had heard had been left by a ship that had wintered in the same place, some time before. These men provided themselves with

* The chronometers used in the Grinnell Arctic expedition were subjected to the severest tests, yet so exquisitely were those delicately constructed instruments provided with adjustments and compensations for the great extremes of temperature, that one of them, after having been exposed to a Polar winter, is returned with a change in its daily rate, during 17 months, of only the three-hundredth part of one second in time.

† Sir John Richardson's Journal, vol. ii. p. 151.

‡ Arctic Miscellanies, p. 293.

a musket, powder-horn, containing twelve charges of powder, some lead, an axe, a small kettle, a stove, a piece of touchwood, a knife, a tin box, full of tobacco, and each man a pipe. They succeeded in finding the hut, when the wind, which had been blowing hard, now increased to a gale, and obliged them to take shelter that night within the wretched dwelling. To their horror, on seeking the beach the next morning, they found that ice, ship, and all hands had disappeared.

At the thought of being thus abandoned, despair seized upon them, but it yielded to the pressing necessity of seeking food. Happily, reindeer abounded, and the twelve charges produced as many deer. The flesh of these animals was almost consumed, when a portion of wood and a nail were found on the beach, with which they made a lance, and succeeded in killing a bear. Of the tendons they made strings for a bow, and with arrows they killed all the reindeer, and blue and white foxes, which served them for food during the period of their stay on this deserted spot. After six dreary years had passed over their heads, they lost one of their comrades. The remaining three were taken away in 1749, by a Russian ship, whose attention they had succeeded in attracting, having passed six years and three months in this dreadful seclusion.

The Russian traveller, Deshnew, who first had the honour of sailing from the Kolyma river, through the Polar into the Pacific ocean, as far as the Anadyr river, set out on his expedition in June, 1648. Though he was at last completely lost sight of, and his fate never ascertained, news was heard of him up to 1654. And during these six years he pursued his object with unexampled activity and perseverance, overcoming the difficulties which hunger, the climate, and the inhabitants placed in his way. And to come to later times, it is well known that Sir John Ross was frozen in, in Prince Regent's Inlet, for four years, and was given up by all the world as lost, and yet he was saved, and still survives to tell his own tale. In the face of these facts it is too soon to despair of Sir John Franklin and his brave comrades.

CONSEQUENCE; OR, DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

BY OLD HUMPHREY.

It has been said, though we suspect the remark must have emanated from one short in stature, "that all great men are little men;" Alexander the Great, Buonaparte, Doctor Watts, and a score others, being cited as illustrations of the fact. Without stopping to gainsay an opinion so manifestly apocryphal, we will content ourselves with the observation that, to our certain knowledge, all little men are not great men.

Mr. Silas Sydney was a little man, being barely five feet in height, but, as many a six-foot man loses an inch by stooping in the shoulder, so he gained an inch by his unusually erect position; and besides, he wore boots with thick soles, and a hat with a high crown. Trees and plants are supposed to stretch themselves upwards in quest of air and light, but the upward aspirations of Mr. Sydney may, without doing him injustice, be attributed to

a different origin. If ever the self-important consequence of a would-be great man was set forth in a miniature scale, it was in the stunted proportions of Mr. Silas Sydney.

Deficiency in personal appearance is, by no means, a proper object of reproach, for a plain casket may contain a lovely jewel, and homely bodies have often been the abodes of exalted minds; but when one of mean appearance affects the great and consequential, he invites derision and makes himself a target for the shafts of ridicule.

Mr. Silas Sydney had been a small tradesman, and though sadly deficient in general knowledge, a natural cunning and quick-sightedness in regard to his own interest enabled him to extend his business and acquire wealth. He was chosen churchwarden, and in course of time appointed a magistrate. Like many others who have risen rapidly, he became insufferably vain and consequential, so much so, that his appearance alone seemed to say, "Do you know who I am?"

We have sometimes wished that a scale of excellence could accompany degrees in society, and that the higher a man rose in station, the higher he should be required to ascend in wisdom and virtue. Position would then really be the standard of the man, and rank and dignity would receive the willing homage of the head and the heart. Such a state of things, however, is far beyond our expectation, or our hope; still we do think that it behoves every one who rises in life to do his best to fill the position he occupies creditably, and to fit himself for a discharge of its duties.

In acting as a magistrate, Mr. Sydney, who had never so much as opened "Coke upon Littleton," or "Blackstone's Commentaries," in his life, till the very week in which he was appointed to the commission of the peace, was of necessity greatly dependent for information on his brother magistrates and the clerks. Little inconvenience might have arisen from this circumstance, had he conducted himself with becoming diffidence and modesty; but, instead of this, his upstart consequence and insufferable conceit led him into continual altercation.

It would be difficult to decide which is the more lamentable spectacle, that of a feeble man striving with one of greater strength; or a man of limited intellect playing the mental gladiator against one of acknowledged understanding. In each of these unenviable positions Mr. Sydney was occasionally to be found.

It happened that a disagreement took place between Mr. Silas Sydney and one of his work-people, and things were carried to such a pitch that the latter was given into custody. Every one expected, when the affair was about to be decided, that Mr. Sydney, as a matter of course, would retire from the bench, and not sit in judgment on his own case. So far, however, from this was the fact, that he remained as a member of the court, and persisted in adjudicating in the most arbitrary manner. Rather than sanction such barefaced injustice, his brother magistrates unanimously quitted the bench.

Thus left to himself, Mr. Sydney soon involved himself in a quarrel with the chief clerk, to whom, in his consequential arrogance, he cried out, "Do you know who I am, sir?" Whereupon the clerk, excited far beyond discretion, replied in open court,

"Yes, sir, I do know who you are. You are a magistrate without law, and a man without modesty."

On one occasion when passing along the street, Mr. Sydney met a stout fellow in his cups, who was brawling aloud. Such a one was a more fit subject for the attention of a policeman, than for that of a magistrate. It is by no means a mark of discretion to struggle, either mentally or bodily, with a drunken man, and still less so if he be powerful in his frame. Mr. Silas Sydney, however, not being a man of discretion, was free from prudential regulations. He knew that he was a magistrate, and being thus "drest in a little brief authority," proceeded at once to reprimand the drunkard.

"Do you know who I am?" said he, finding that little attention was paid to his reproof. "No!" replied the brawler, "who are you?" "I am a magistrate." "Then here's at you, Mr. Magistrate," and down went his worship, measuring his length in the mire. No sooner was Mr. Sydney reinstated on his legs, than he again consequentially vociferated, "Do you know who I am?" "Who are you?" cried out the drunkard. "I am a magistrate," cried out Mr. Sydney, with even more consequence than before. "Take that then," was the instantaneous reply of the staggerer, again prostrating Mr. Sydney on the ground. A rush was now made by some bystanders, not to rescue the man from the magistrate, but the magistrate from the man, which timely assistance in all probability saved Mr. Silas Sydney from another roll in the dirt.

On a subsequent occasion, a dog, from a cottage at the skirts of the town, ran after him barking. This so much excited his anger, that he forthwith proceeded to reprove in no measured terms the poor cottager who owned the animal which had offended him. "Do you know who I am?" said he, in his customary consequential way, towering with indignation. "Yes, sir," replied the simple cottager, "I knows who you be; but the misfortune is, that my dog doesn't know it, sir."

As the little great man walked away, smarting with wounded pride, his mortification was heightened by hearing a band of boys, who happened to be playing near, mimicking his voice and manner, crying out to one another, "Do you know who I am? Do you know who I am?"

This is a world of ups and downs, and Mr. Sydney found it to be such. His consequential disposition led him to abandon trade, and to affect the fine gentleman; but the littleness of his real worth so ill suited the largeness of his pretensions, that those who were of the grade to which he aspired had no desire for his society. His arrogance made him enemies, and his measures brought upon him contempt. At last his name disappeared from the commission of the peace, his property declined, and by degrees, without the sympathy of a single being, the little great man became a neglected nobody. When he left the neighbourhood he was too unimportant to be missed, and too worthless to be regretted.

Many years have now rolled away since Mr. Silas Sydney's career, and the records of his history are very scanty; he never had a friend, and therefore cannot, as such, be remembered. No almshouse is inscribed with his name, and no widow or

orphan pronounces his name as a benefactor. In short, whether he is dead or alive, nobody seems either to know or care.

Some time ago the inquiry was put to an old inhabitant of the place, "Do you remember anything of one Silas Sydney?" "Oh yes!" said he, "a consequential little man, who wore thick-heeled boots, and a high-crowned hat. He was made a magistrate—more's the pity—and got laughed at by everybody for his arrogance and conceited question, 'Do you know who I am, sir? Do you know who I am?'"

WORKMEN'S CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES.

CONSIDERABLE attention has been drawn of late* to certain industrial associations which have been formed among the working classes, with the avowed purpose of improving their temporal condition. Such a design was worthy the respectful notice of every philanthropist, not only because it emanated from working men, and bespoke an earnest desire to rise in the social scale, but because it brought before the world an untried principle, and predicted large results from its extensive application. The plan proposed was, briefly, that the working classes should become, to a great extent, their own employers, by subscribing among themselves, or borrowing on interest, sufficient capital to set themselves to work. It was argued that such a step would not only be beneficial to the individuals immediately concerned in it, by enabling them to appropriate the profits of the employers; but that, by lessening competition in the labour market, it would have a general tendency to raise wages. It would, perhaps, be premature to say that the experiment has failed, since the time during which the various associations have been in existence is not sufficient for a fair trial. More than thirty have been commenced in Lancashire and Yorkshire alone, but scarcely one of these can number more than three years, while the great bulk have been formed within the last twelve months. But however the experiment may turn out, the mere working of it is a remarkable phenomenon of our times, and cannot fail to exert a powerful and beneficial influence upon the opinions of the working classes. It has furnished them with an opportunity for taking a practical lesson on some of the fundamental doctrines of political economy, and has already thrown more light upon the relations which subsist between the employer and the employed, than could have resulted from the zealous labours of twenty lecturers. We shall watch the progress of these industrial associations with much interest, and occasionally report upon them to the reader; meanwhile, it may be both interesting and instructive to give a brief account of one with which we are personally acquainted. It will afford us some clue to the nature of those aspirations after an improved condition, which are the true basis of the present movement, and bring out some features of the moral state of our operatives, which may be of some service to those who

* This paper was written before the recent engineers' strike; but derives much additional importance from its bearing on that question.